

WYCOMBE WANDERERS have the pleasure of entertaining one of the founder clubs of the Football League tomorrow (Wednesday) when Derby County visit Loakes Park (7.30 p.m.).

Nicknamed "The Rams", Derby County originated from Derbyshire Cricket Club. The football section was founded in 1884 and four years later — 1888 — became original members of the Football League.

Now managed by Brian Clough, Derby appear to contain all the qualifications required to join the prestige clubs of the First Division.

Clough has built his side cleverly and shrewdly. He has the modern image of a "track-suit" manager and because of Derby's change in fortunes since he joined the Midlands team, his name has been linked with the managerial vacancy at Old Trafford since Sir Matt decided to take on the general manager's role.

Currently top of Division II with a four-point advantage over Cardiff City, Derby, providing they don't panic, are hot favourites for the championship.

Clough openly admits that since he bought Dave Mackay from Spurs, the team have never looked back. The Scot's driving play and bubbling enthusiasm for the very game itself has lifted the younger players around him.

There is no doubt that Mackay is a remarkable character. He has made a wonderful recovery since breaking his leg twice and is one of Britain's finest, hard-tackling, attacking wing-halves.

Born in Edinburgh, Mackay developed with the Heart of Midlothian nursery team, signing professional forms for Hearts on his 17th birthday in November, 1952.

Since making his debut for Hearts when he was 19, Mackay has an unique record as far as soccer honours are concerned. He has been capped "as a schoolboy, under-23 and full international, and while with Hearts won Scottish League Cup winners medals (1954 and 1958), Scottish Cup medal (1956), Scottish League Championship medal (1958) and also played for the Scottish League.

He was transferred to Tottenham in March, 1959, and is, indeed, the only player to appear for the Football League against the Scottish League as well as for the Scottish League against the Football League. Of course, Mackay has won F.A. Cup medals (1961 and 1962) and a Football League Championship medal in 1961 — the year of Tottenham's marvellous "double" achievement.

In November, 1962, it was reported that the Italian club, Fiorentina, were interested in Mackay and were prepared to £120,000 for his transfer.

Other personalities in the Derby side are striker Kevin Hector and schemer Willie Carlin. Hector joined Derby for a fee of £40,000 in 1966 and his improvement has been so marked that now only a £100,000 cheque would secure his services should he be available.

Formerly with Bradford, Hector has matured into one of the game's feared strikers. In each of his four seasons at Bradford he led their scorers with 19, 17, 29 and 44. His 44 goals in 1965/66 made him the top scorer in the Football League and second highest in the history of Division IV.

Carlin has been with a host of clubs since Liverpool discovered him on leaving school. Standing only 5ft. 5in. and tipping the scales at around 9 stone 6lb. mark, he makes up for his lack of height and weight with skilful ball play.

After only one league appearance with Liverpool he was surprisingly put on the transfer list in 1962 and was snapped up by Halifax Town.

During their 69 seasons, Derby have spent 43 campaigns in the higher sphere, two were endured in Division III (North) and they have completed 24 in Division II.

They won the F.A. Cup in 1946, were Second Division champions in 1912 and 1915, and won the Division III (North) championship in 1957.

Derby have twice (in 1910 and 1924) had the galling experience of missing promotion to Division I on goal average. However, Brian Clough and his men with their thorough approach to the demands of the modern game are not depending on goal average this season, but instead a healthy points tally for their return to Division I.